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Letter dated 20 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I write to acknowledge the Security Council's letter of 31 May 2018, which I had duly shared with our authorities concerned. On their behalf, I wish to thank the Council for the kind words addressed to the Government of the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, and the people of Bangladesh.

We are indeed very grateful to the Security Council for the recognition of our continuing efforts to address the humanitarian needs of the 1.1 million Rohingyas who have sought shelter in our country and for the assistance of the international community in alleviating the suffering of this desperate Rohingya population. We may not be able to continue to make any headway unless the international community, especially the Security Council, remains engaged as custodian of our efforts. As rightly underscored by the Secretary-General during his recent visit to the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh, the Council has to take concerted and determined action to address the Rohingya crisis.

The Government of Bangladesh is aware of the perils posed by the monsoon and cyclone seasons. We assure you that the Government is doing everything at its disposal to minimize the risks and support the vulnerable population among the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals, many of whom are currently sheltered on the slopes in areas recently deforested to accommodate their influx from Myanmar. New land has been provided to build shelters for the most vulnerable ones requiring immediate relocation. We would welcome assistance from the United Nations to further advance these efforts. We would also welcome specialized assistance from the United Nations for the protection of the victims of grave human rights abuses, including sexual violence, to shield them against trafficking and exploitation, and to provide basic education and skills in the coming days.

We are encouraged by the Security Council's assurance of support towards facilitating the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the Rohingyas to Myanmar's Rakhine State. The protracted presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh not only is detrimental to our security and national interests but will also have long-term negative impacts on the Rohingya people. While we continue to engage in good faith with Myanmar with a view to implementing the provisions of the arrangements of return signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar, we regret that the necessary conditions for safe and sustainable return do not exist in Myanmar. Nor has Myanmar taken any demonstrable effort to address the concerns of the Rohingyas and the international community.

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We believe that the visit of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Myanmar would offer the Security Council the opportunity to hear about her first-hand assessment of the prevailing situation on the ground as far as the Rohingyas' voluntary repatriation is concerned.

Unfortunately, instead of recognizing the catastrophic scale of the crisis and its grave impact on Bangladesh, Myanmar, in its letter to the Security Council dated 27 June 2018, attempts to downplay it by erroneously claiming that the "reported number of displaced persons who left for the Bangladesh side is much inflated". Myanmar asserts that the "real figure cannot be higher than half a million", which itself is massive in scale, whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has placed the total number of displaced Rohingyas at 887,661 as at 14 June 2018.

Yet we would continue to engage with Myanmar to help address any practical challenges to the Rohingyas' voluntary repatriation and expect it to proceed in a constructive manner so as to avoid any pretext for delaying the process. Our continuous engagement with Myanmar, including the forthcoming visit of our Foreign Minister to Rakhine State to see for himself the preparations for repatriation on the Myanmar side, bears testimony to our sincerity in this regard.

In its letter to the Security Council dated 27 June 2018, Myanmar has accused Bangladesh of building bunkers near the border line, in violation of the boundary demarcation treaty of 1998, which prohibits the building of any structure within 150 feet of the border line. We are utterly dismayed by such false and baseless claims. The bunker closest to the Bangladesh side of the border is situated at a distance of 654 feet of the border line (see annex). As regards the structures between boundary pillars Nos. 34 and 35, those are basically temporary shelters built by the displaced Rohingyas who had fled their homes in northern Rakhine but did not cross the border and therefore fall within the Myanmar side of the border line.*

As for the commencement of the repatriation of the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals verified by Myanmar, we would like to draw attention to article 2 (b) of the memorandum of understanding signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh, which stipulates that the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals choosing to return are entitled to do so in conditions of safety and dignity, which has to be assured by Myanmar, and that they should not be required to return to a containment facility or to a camp for internally displaced persons (article 2 (c)). We would like to invite the engagement of the Security Council to ensure such conducive conditions in Myanmar to facilitate the return of the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals.

I take this opportunity to emphasize that the Government of Prime Minister Hasina maintains a "zero tolerance" policy towards terrorism. We have unequivocally condemned any attack on Myanmar security forces and offered assistance to jointly combat terrorism. Nonetheless, such attacks do not justify the incitement to hatred, disproportionate use of force, violence and atrocity crimes against the Rohingyas through their collective characterization as "terrorists". Such a policy is inconsistent with the intention to allow the safe and dignified return of the Rohingyas to their homeland.

We note that establishing a framework for cooperation between the United Nations and Myanmar is a step in the right direction. There is, however, a need for transparency and a demonstration of concrete deliverables so that the Rohingyas can gain the required trust and confidence that, upon returning to their homes in Rakhine State, they will not be subject to further discrimination and violence. Moreover, it is

* Images and maps are on file with the Secretariat and available for consultation.

of the utmost importance that the remaining Rohingyas residing in Rakhine State are guaranteed unconditional protection (through the creation and maintenance of United Nations-administered safe zones) within Myanmar. We continue to work towards achieving tangible progress, which requires action by Myanmar as the source of the humanitarian crisis. We express our gratitude to the Security Council for its continued involvement.

Since the beginning of the crisis in August 2017, Bangladesh has been acting responsibly and resorting to all possible peaceful means to resolve the recurrent Rohingya crisis permanently and sustainably. Our Prime Minister has made very specific proposals at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, which include the complete cessation of violence in Myanmar, sending a fact-finding mission of the Secretary-General to Myanmar, the protection of civilians inside Myanmar with the involvement of the United Nations, the sustainable return of Rohingyas to their homes in Myanmar and the full and unconditional implementation of the recommendations of the Kofi Annan-led Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. We need the unremitting attention of the Security Council for the early and effective realization of those proposals.

The Security Council's upcoming consultations on the situation in Myanmar should hopefully pave the way for the possible adoption of a much-anticipated resolution. The Government and people of Bangladesh would consider that to be an important next step for the Council to demonstrate its unity of purpose.

I would greatly appreciate it if the present letter could be circulated among the members of the Security Council as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Masud **Bin Momen**

Annex to the letter dated 20 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

1.	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
2.	[illegible]	TUMBRU LEFT CAMP AROUND ROUNDABOUT	[illegible]	
3.	TUMBRU LEFT CAMP (KONAPARA)	MG	[illegible]	
4.	TUMBRU LEFT CAMP (KONAPARA)	MG	[illegible]	
5.	TUMBRU LEFT CAMP (KONAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
6.	TUMBRU LEFT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	MG	300 FEET	
7.	TUMBRU LEFT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
8.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
9.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
10.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
11.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
12.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
13.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
14.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (PURBAPARA)	LMG	300 FEET	
15.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (UTTARPARA)	RIFLE	300 FEET	
16.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (UTTARPARA)	RIFLE	300 FEET	
17.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (UTTARPARA)	RIFLE	300 FEET	
18.	TUMBRU RIGHT CAMP (UTTARPARA)	RIFLE	300 FEET	

[illegible] OF BUNKER BANGLADESH SIDE

1.	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
2.	GHUMDHUM BOP (NOYAPARA)	LMG	984 FEET	
3.	GHUMDHUM BOP (JOLPAITOLI)	LMG	1638 FEET	
4.	GHUMDHUM BOP (NOYAPARA)	MG	854 FEET	
5.	GHUMDHUM BOP (JOLPAITOLI)	MG	654 FEET	
6.	TUMBRU BOP (INFRONT OF TUMBRU UP)	MG	984 FEET	
6.	TUMBRU BOP (KONAPARA)	RIFLE	1500 FEET	